



HIGHLAND POLICE DEPARTMENT
3315 RIDGE ROAD • HIGHLAND • IN • 46322





“One look is all it took ... our police needed a new place”

Long before its useful life was set to expire, the lower level of the Highland Municipal Building was showing signs of fatigue. Water pressure was virtually nonexistent. Tap water was unfit for drinking. Scant security and staffing levels that exceeded what was anticipated when the department was built in 1969 added to the concern.

By the mid-1990s, the Metropolitan Board of Police Commissioners voiced their concerns that something had to be done – either an overhaul of the existing facility or build new.

“There really wasn’t much difference in cost and we never could have built out enough to accommodate the needs of the department,” Cdr. George Georgeff said. “Early estimates showed a 25 percent difference between building new and renovating. We still would have had an old foundation and support walls.”

The need was there but absent the political will, the project was left on the back burner: Early designs and plans were put back on the shelf for what would be another 15 years.

After the big-ticket flooding problems were addressed, the Town Council made a new department a priority. Councilman Dennis Adams took up where long-time backer Brian Novak left off and was named the council’s liaison on the project. Diagnosed with cancer, Adams did not live to see the new building, but many of his suggestions and ideas were included in the project.

“I had never realized how bad things were in the police department until we went on a tour,” Town Council President Bernie Zemen said. “One look was all it took to realize just how badly our police officers needed a new and better place to do their jobs.”

THE OLD BUILDING

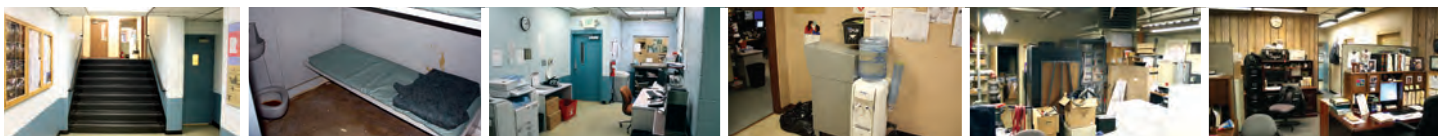
BUILT: 1969

TOWN POPULATION: 16,284

STAFFING: The old building was designed to accommodate only 19 officers and no volunteers.

“This Town Council knew how great the needs of our police were. This new building would have to be constructed with the existing needs in mind and an eye to the future.”

DAN VASSAR
Town Council Vice President



POOR ACCESS

The Municipal Building was built on four levels with a maze of doors and stairways that made security virtually impossible. It also made the department noncompliant with federal guidelines regarding access for those with disabilities.

OLD JAIL CELLS

1969-vintage cells were grandfathered-in, but did not conform to today’s Justice Department standards. In-house traffic patterns forced suspects and victims to cross paths, which served as an additional security risk.

NO WORKSPACE

When the department ran out of room, desks were set up in hallways where equipment was also stored. Paper-shredding had to cease whenever another staff member was on the phone or someone arrived at the records window.

UNSAFE WATER

Burst pipes under the foundation prevented some toilets from flushing on the lower levels. Their location made a fix impossible. Potable water was not safe for drinking. The roof leaked and lower level seeped.

NO STORAGE

Seven off-site facilities housed equipment. Desks were piled high with cases and reports because the department ran out of room. Temporary storage was erected in the boiler room, holding rooms and communication rooms.

LACK OF PRIVACY

Too few interview rooms meant a lack of privacy for victims of sexual abuse and domestic violence. Conversations could often be overheard by civilians and volunteers as well as the general public.



New police building suits needs of today – and tomorrow

A decades-old dream come true, the new Highland police station provides ample space for the uniformed division, civilian personnel and Volunteers in Policing to do their jobs today – and for decades to come.

Triple the size of the space they vacated, the new building maximizes natural light, is handicapped accessible and wired to meet the department's computer and communication needs.

High-efficiency lights along with heating and cooling systems take advantage of smart technology available today.

In December, Highland dedicated the new building, welcoming hundreds of residents as well as, current and former members of the department.

Three months later, Police Chief Pete Hojnicky said the new space feels like home.

"This was a long journey. At its conclusion, we were able to deliver a building that suits perfectly the needs of this community and its police department today – and for generations to come," Hojnicky said. "I have to thank the members of the Town Council who saw a need and provided the resources to make it happen."

Other departments toured the facility and told Highland it did the right thing in going bigger.

If this Town Council or a future council decides there is a need for a new town hall, Cdr. George Georgeff said the building is designed to easily connect the two, making it possible to share an entrance, common areas, even an elevator.

"The architect planned for that eventuality," he said. "It involved minor changes and will reduce the price if a decision is made to build new."

THE NEW BUILDING

BUILT: 2015

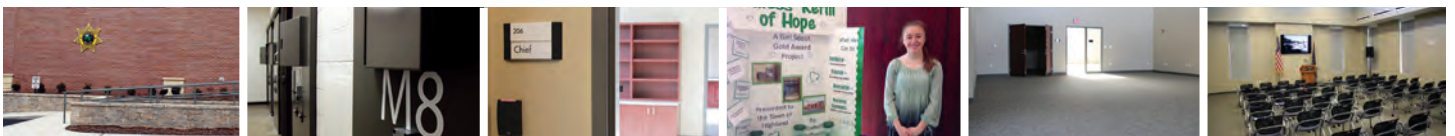
TOWN POPULATION: 23,546

STAFFING: The new facility is designed to accommodate 42 officers and 30 volunteers – with room to grow.

"Huge congratulations are in order and a big thank you to the Town Council. This new building has everything I would have wanted to see when I was an officer here."

LARRY WOODS

Highland Police Chief 1994-1997



ADA COMPLIANT

The department is ADA compliant from the entrance and hallways to the offices and restrooms. The facility is accessible to everyone regardless of mobility issues.

NEW JAIL CELLS

Jail cells employ the latest technology, which is designed to keep prisoners and officers safe. The configuration and location of the cells keeps prisoners separated from victims and the general public.

DEDICATED OFFICES

No more sharing desks! Workflow is enhanced with dedicated offices designed to make the paperwork part of the job as efficient as possible.

DRINKABLE WATER

Not only is it safe to drink the water from any faucet, the department received the gift of a special water fountain to go greener. The ADA accessible fixtures display the number of water bottles saved by being refilled at the site.

AMPLE STORAGE

Storage units are a thing of the past. All evidence is stored on-site, reducing the likelihood of critical items being misplaced or damaged while in transit.

COMMUNITY ROOM

Crime Watch and Police Commission meetings along with the Citizens Police Academy, training and the town courts can now meet on-site. The community room – and the facility itself – is equipped for emergency and disaster use.

COMMUNITY POLICING

NEIGHBORHOOD CRIME WATCH

Learn about crime trends in your neighborhood as well as innovative ways Highland police are fighting the bad guys during our bimonthly Crime Watch meetings.

Crime Watch topics run the gamut – from prevention to law enforcement. The meetings, which often feature guest speakers, spark interesting discussion and there is always plenty of time for questions and answers.

NEXT MEETING: The next Crime Watch meeting is at 6:30 p.m. March 9 in the Community Room of the new Highland Police Department. **QUESTIONS?** Call Cpl. Shawn Anderson at (219) 838-3184, ext. 4074 or email sanderson@highland.in.gov.

NIXLE ALERTS

Realizing the value of communicating to the community in real time, Police Chief Pete Hojnicky and Fire Chief Bill Timmer banded together to bring the Nixle emergency system to Highland.

That was in 2009. Today the popular system provides up-to-the-minute information on weather emergencies, road closures, even crimes-in-progress.

The service is free and allows residents to create an account that provides secure messaging by locale. In the event of an emergency, police send out details via text message, email – or both.

INFO: To register, log onto www.nixle.com.

G.R.E.A.T. PROGRAM

For several weeks in early summer, Police Sgt. Michael O'Donnell, the town's school resource officer, leads a group of enthusiastic school children through activities that focused on team-building and empowering pre-teens to make positive life choices.

G.R.E.A.T. is a national program developed and sponsored by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

INFO: Visit www.ojjdp.gov to learn more.

CITIZEN'S POLICE ACADEMY

Safe communities start when citizens take ownership, working with law enforcement. That's where the Citizen's Police Academy comes in. The ten-week course allows residents to see how Highland's finest operates – up close and personal.

From ride-alongs to a trip to the shooting range to weekly classes that follow crime from its source to the courts, participants have the opportunity to become part of law enforcement's crime-fighting team.

Dep. Cdr. John Banasiak, coordinator of the academy, said the goal of every class is to involve interested citizens in learning policing from the inside. "It takes all of us working together to keep our community safe. We have been very fortunate we have had so many interested citizens who have taken part in this program.

The Citizen's Police Academy involves weekly classes as well as work outside the classroom. Topics included in the training are:

- Police Department tour
- Lake County courts and prosecutors office
- Gangs and dangerous drugs
- Police Employees Assistance Program
- Criminal investigation and evidence collection
- Firearms training simulator
- School Resource Officer
- Ride-alongs
- Police chaplain program

HOW TO APPLY: Applications are available online at www.highlandpolice.com. Simply fill out and mail to:

Highland Police Department
3315 Ridge Road
Highland, IN 46322

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Call Deputy Cdr. John Banasiak at (219) 838-3184 or email jbanskiak@highland.in.gov.

